



TESTIMONY

Delivered by Tracy Wodatch, Vice President of Clinical and Regulatory Services
Before the Public Health Committee

February 23, 2015

We OPPOSE Proposed Bill No. 681: AN ACT CONCERNING BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR HOME HEALTH AGENCY EMPLOYEES to include fingerprinting.

Senators Gerratana and Crisco, Representatives Ritter and Riley, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Tracy Wodatch, Vice President of Clinical and Regulatory Services at the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home. I am also an RN with over 30 years experience in home health, hospice, long term and acute care.

The Association represents 62 Connecticut DPH licensed/Medicare certified home health and hospice agencies that foster cost-effective, person-centered healthcare in the setting people prefer most – their own home.

Connecticut home health agencies are major employers with a growing workforce and an “on-the-ground army” of approximately 17,500 employees. We ensure that chronic conditions of the Medicaid frail elderly, disabled, and homebound are managed and their healthcare is coordinated across the provider continuum.

The current statute (section 19a-491d) states that “each home health agency, prior to extending an offer of employment to an applicant for employment with the agency, shall require such applicant to submit to a comprehensive background check.” This has been in place since January 1, 2012.

In addition in section 19a-491c(b)(2), “the Department of Public Health (DPH) shall develop a plan to implement the criminal history and patient abuse background search program, in accordance with this section. For the past 3 years, DPH has been working collaboratively with the long term care providers (which DPH has defined to include home health agencies) to implement the CT Long Term Care National Criminal Background Check Program. This will be an automated web-based process with fingerprinting that will include the following screens:

- CT and National Sex Offender Registry
- DSS Administrative Actions List
- OIG Exclusion List
- CT Nurse Aide Registry List
- DPH License Verification System
- CT Judicial Criminal Convictions Database



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HEALTHCARE AT HOME

The program will be implemented using a phased-in approach based on provider type beginning with nursing homes and moving on to home health agencies later this year. The funding will cover initial implementation costs for a period of one year. Thereafter, the additional costs for the added fingerprinting will again be the responsibility of the provider. Per DPH, total cost to perform full background check including fingerprinting is an estimated \$86 per applicant.

As outlined, I believe this proposed bill requiring fingerprinting be added to the criminal background check mandate already in place may be duplicative of a statute already in place.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on this bill. Please reach out to us as a resource for additional information at any time.

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